



Riparian Restoration Program

Protecting the Lifeblood of the Sky Island Region

Sky Island Alliance

www.SkyIslandAlliance.org



Wet, Wild—and Disappearing Fast

- Riparian areas are streams (flowing year-round, intermittently, or even underground) or bodies of water such as *ciénegas* that support enhanced growth of vegetation, and animals adapted to living in or near water. More than 90% of the desert’s animals depend on riparian areas for feeding, breeding, resting, or travelling—including humans, whose drinking water comes from groundwater recharged by riparian areas.
- In southern Arizona only 0.4% of the landscape is riparian, and it is estimated that more than 90% of this has been lost.

Citizens and Scientists—Taking Action

- Sky Island Alliance has mobilized a corps of volunteers and agency partners who are inventorying important plants and animals in riparian areas in the Sky Island region to assess their health—and the potential to restore them.
- Initiated after the Chiricahua leopard frog was listed as an endangered species, the program reflects the Sky Island Alliance hallmark of involving volunteers in direct conservation action.
- We work in cooperation with the University of Arizona, Arizona Game & Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and private landowners to achieve program goals.



Sky Island Alliance volunteers inventory riparian areas for “indicator species”—animals such as this young lowland leopard frog—whose presence or absence tells us a lot about the health of a stream or ciénega.

*It's easy to
care,
but it takes
courage to
act.*



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- To date, 60 volunteers have been trained in inventory protocols for the Chiricahua leopard frog, other riparian animals, and riparian vegetation; they have worked over 2,000 soggy but cool hours so far.
- Program focal areas include the Pajarito Mountains west of Nogales, the Huachuca Mountains and Canelo Hills east of Nogales, and the Peloncillo Mountains, which straddle the Arizona-New Mexico border and bridge the Mogollon Highlands and the Sierra Madre Occidental.

Small Frog—Big Picture

- A frog might seem like an awfully small animal to carry the weight of so much Sky Island conservation—but this is just the first step in a broader ecological-conditions assessment for the Sky Island region.
- By collecting information now on the state of health of Sky Island ecosystems and the animals that depend on them—and then acting on that information to find solutions to problems through partnerships—we might be able to head off future population crashes that lead to endangered species listings.



Sky Island Alliance—Action for Protection

Sky Island Alliance has become the major force for applied conservation in the region. *We are the only conservation group in the Southwest that “connects the dots” between landscape-level planning, implementing widescale on-the-ground conservation, creating advocacy, and influencing public policy.*

Together with our partners—citizens, scientists, policy makers, and land management agencies—we will safeguard the future of our rivers and ciénegas. . .

The lifeblood of the Sky Island Region.